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PRIZE ESSAY.

THE TEACHER'S MANUAL :

BEING AN EXPOSITION OF AN EFFICIENT AND ECONOMICAL SYSTEM OF  
EDUCATION, SUITED TO THE WANTS OF A FREE PEOPLE.

BY THOMAS H. PALMER, A. M., OF PITTSFORD, VT.

"First, must the *dead-letter* of 'Education' own itself dead, and drop, piecemeal, into dust, if the *living spirit* of 'Education,' freed from this, its charnel-house, is to arise on us, and with new healing on its wings."—CARLYLE.

[Below, are two Chapters of Mr. Palmer's PRIZE ESSAY on Common Schools. We propose to give some other parts of it, in subsequent Numbers of the Journal. The whole Essay, however, is now published in Boston, and, by an arrangement made with the American Institute of Instruction, to whom the copyright belonged, it is to be sold at '*just cost price*.' This will place it within the reach of every person interested in the subject of Common Schools, and we earnestly commend to them an early perusal of the Work.—ED.]

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

My main objects, in the present Treatise, are fourfold :

I. To show the inequality, inefficiency, and wastefulness of our present system of education : or, to use the words of the motto to the title, to show that it is a mere "*dead-letter*," and cause it to "*own itself dead, and drop, piecemeal, into dust*," so as to enable its "*living spirit, freed from this, its charnel-house, to arise on us, with new healing on its wings*."

II. To show that an equal, complete, and efficient, system would be productive of an immense saving, both of time, and money :

First, by dividing the schools into two classes, so as to have all the *primary* schools kept *permanently*, in place of for short terms, and the *central*, or high schools, *during the Winter*.

Secondly, by thus providing situations for a body of *permanent, experienced* female teachers, looking solely to their profession for a support, who should take the place of the inexperienced, young girls, who now have recourse to teaching, for mere temporary purposes.

Thirdly, by the establishment of Normal Schools, the time and resources of which should not be squandered in teaching what can readily be acquired elsewhere ; but which should confine their attention to real *desiderata*, and be discontinued, as totally unnecessary, as soon as good models should be spread over the land.

Fourthly, by providing libraries of school-books as well as of books for circulation, and by establishing a system of exchanges among the districts.

III. To examine, thoroughly, the whole system of education, going into the *most minute details*, wherever it is found defective or injurious, and passing more rapidly, over such parts as require little or no amendment.

IV. To make a commencement on the hitherto-neglected subject of *Morals*, for primary schools, and to place *Discipline* on its proper foundation, the CONSCIENCE.

Many other topics are treated of, incidentally, such as the division of towns into Districts, the laying out of School lots, erecting, lighting, warming, &c., of Schoolhouses, town and county Conventions of Teachers, &c. ; the whole being designed to present a complete and liberal System of Education, suited to the wants of a Free People, in whose hands the whole system of government may be safely intrusted.

For many years, I have been in the habit of entering, in a commonplace book, my own thoughts, as well as extracts from the publications of the day, on the subject of Education. As this was commenced long before I had any intention of writing on the subject, I have seldom used any discriminative marks, between my own ideas and those of others. It is not improbable, therefore, that, in this Essay, in which, of course, I made free use of my commonplace book, I may sometimes unconsciously have used the words or ideas of others, without giving them proper credit. Should this prove to be the case, in a few instances, I trust the writers and the public will accept of this apology.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### *Introductory.*

"I call, therefore, a complete and generous education, that which fits a man to perform justly, skillfully, and magnanimously, all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war."—MILTON.

IN the following pages, it is proposed to inquire, what are the requisites for a *good education for the whole people*, and what are the best means of attaining them ; in other words, to present the picture of a good district and town school ; or, as they are sometimes called, a primary and high school. It is also proposed to inquire into the best means of *equalizing* the benefits of education ; or, more properly speaking, of bringing the means of a thorough education within the reach of *every child* in the community. As having an important bearing on these subjects, the local situation and internal arrangement of schoolhouses will also be taken into consideration. The *Normal School*, or Seminary for Teachers, will also claim its due share of attention.

All this, however, will not be sufficient for the attainment of the great object, which at present occupies so much of the attention of many modern philanthropists,—the physical, intellectual, and moral, improvement of the community, through the medium of schools. The great body of society, particularly in New England, are perfectly satisfied with their present system. It is generally supposed, that the people owe all that shrewdness and intelligence for which they are so remarkable, and all their industrious and moral habits, to the District School. Hence, it is a very natural inference, that the system cannot be so faulty and imperfect, as is frequently represented ; and that, in fact, it would be rather a hazardous experiment, in any way to meddle with it. Before, therefore, we can expect to succeed in producing any beneficial changes, especially where these changes are of a radical nature, it is necessary, clearly and explicitly to show the fallacy of these views. One of the most important objects of this Treatise, then, will be an exposition of the deficiencies and defects of the system now in use, and a demonstration of the fallacy which would refer all, or even most, of our moral and intellectual worth to School Education.

Let it, however, be distinctly understood, that *all* the deficiencies, defects, and evils, which will be pointed out, do *not* exist in *every* public

school. Our system of instruction is at present in a state of transition. Ten years ago, the primary schools were conducted in a uniform routine. In discipline, books, arrangement of studies, and mode of tuition, all were alike. But, so far is this from being the case now, that it would probably be difficult to find two schools conducted on exactly similar principles, on any one of these points. Hence, no description can possibly suit every case. The only practicable method of tracing out and eradicating all the defects of our present system of education, then, is to present a complete and correct picture of the schools in their *worst state*, and to call upon each teacher or parent to apply such features only, as are strictly applicable to his mode of tuition.

For instance : if there be any school in which *reading* is taught intellectually rather than mechanically ; where the child has learnt to read in an easy, unaffected manner ; his tones all natural, and his delivery exactly as if he were talking on the same subject with his brothers and sisters ; if, from first to last, he has understood every word he has uttered, before his lesson was finished ; if he has never read any thing without being able to close his book, and give a clear, intelligible statement of it ; then, the remarks on *reading* in this Treatise have no reference whatever to *that* school. But let them not therefore be condemned, as inapplicable. There *are* schools, where the pupils are not so favored ; where they have been taught to read in a stiff, unnatural manner, without any attention to the sense ; to utter, like parrots, mere sounds, without bestowing a thought on the ideas they are intended to convey. It is only to *such* schools, that *all* the remarks on reading are meant to apply.

Between these two kinds of schools, there are various grades. And it is to be hoped, that no teacher, because *every* remark on any one subject is not applicable to him, will therefore reject the whole. As was remarked in speaking of the more perfect school, if the whole be not applicable, let that only be used, which will suit the case. Nothing more was *meant* to be applied to that school.

Similar remarks apply to all the branches treated of, whether they relate to physical, intellectual, or moral culture. In the case of morals, for instance : if the pupils have been trained to *feel*, distinctly, the happiness of virtue, the misery of vice ; the delights arising from general sympathy and the social affections, and the sordid nature of selfishness ; to *see*, clearly, the beauty of placability, forbearance, kindness, and good temper ; the hatefulness of moroseness, malevolence, and cruelty ; the advantages of industry, perseverance, economy, and temperance ; the disadvantages of indolence, instability, extravagance, and intemperance ; the complacency arising from love to God, obedience to His commands, and resignation to His will ; it is probable that the teacher of such a school may not derive much personal advantage from the remarks on the deficiencies of the moral department of the schools. Such a teacher, however, *will not* think them unnecessary. He will know, that, however happy may be the exceptions, the field of morality generally lies almost wholly untilled ; full of little else than poisonous plants and foul weeds ; and he will prize them, even though they may not apply to his own highly-favored school.

## CHAPTER II.

### *Who are our Schoolmasters ?*

It is very important, especially at the present moment, that we should have a clear, distinct idea of the real value of our primary schools. Let us then carefully and candidly inquire, what knowledge they do impart to the mass of the people, to those who have no further advantages of *school* education, leaving, of course, entirely out of view those gifted minds, which are scattered sparsely over every country, who rise, *in spite* of every im-

pediment, and to whom, in fact, mankind are chiefly indebted, for their steady progress from barbarism to civilization.

1st. They teach *Reading*. This art may be considered in two points of view: 1. Reading for others, or reading aloud. Many years are commonly spent in the attempt to gain this accomplishment; and very few make any progress, worthy of the name. For where shall we find a reader, who can keep up an interest in an audience for half an hour? It would appear, then, that the time, labor, and money, expended in learning to *read aloud*, is little better than thrown away. 2. Reading for ourselves, or *silent reading*. Have the pupils of the district school acquired this, to any good purpose? Has it opened to them the door of science? Do they make any practical use of it? Are we a reading people? Alas! I fear these questions must be answered in the negative. The boundless stores of knowledge, instead of being at the command of every member of the community, remain as completely a *sealed book*, as if still shut up in the learned languages. Some, it is true, do contrive to spell out a little in the newspaper, and others regularly read their Bible. But is it to any good purpose? Is their reading more than a form? Have we not reason to fear that an accurate examination would show, that it is little else than a muttering or enunciation of mere sounds, and that, under the heavy labor of bringing them forth, the sense generally escapes?

2d. They teach *Orthography*. Spelling has nothing to do with our present purpose, which relates only to the heart and intellect. It will be fully noticed, in another chapter.

3d. They teach *Arithmetic*. The *form* of this science is taught in our schools, but its true *principles*, buried under a multiplicity of mechanical rules, escape the search of the scholar. He generally forgets the rules a short time after leaving school, though a sufficient knowledge is generally retained for the common business-transactions of the farmer and mechanic. Should more than this be necessary, it must be learned elsewhere. What wonderful returns for the labor of years! More might be acquired in three months, under an intelligent instructor who should pursue a rational course. The great advantage, also, which *might* be derived from the study of this science,—the acquisition of habits of reasoning and patient investigation,—is entirely lost.

4th. They teach *Geography*. But for what purpose? A knowledge of geography is of exceedingly little use to any but *readers*, to whom, indeed, it is indispensable. Those who do not read will forget almost all the whole in a very short time.

5th. They teach *English Grammar*, which claims the high merit of enabling its students to speak and write the English language with purity and propriety. But *do* those who have studied it speak with propriety? Is their language, in any respect, different from that of those around them, who have never opened a book on grammar? As to writing, the critical eye of a grammarian may, it is true, detect an error of syntax; but other sources must be resorted to, for the art of composition. For this, the *structure* of *sentences*, not the mere relations of words, must be understood, and the mind must be stored with *ideas*. Neither of these can be derived from grammar. Such are the studies that occupy the chief part of the time in the primary schools, with, sometimes, in addition, a little writing and a smattering of Natural History. And can it be possible, that the intelligence and sterling worth, for which the community are distinguished, are derived from such scanty sources as these? The idea is preposterous. Whence, then, are they derived? An attentive observation of the progress of a child, from birth to maturity, will, it is believed, solve the problem. Let us make the attempt.

Man's true nature is spiritual. He is "a living soul," clothed, FOR THE PURPOSES OF EDUCATION, with a *fleshy garment*.



At birth, he possesses, along with the seeds of every virtue, and its opposite vice, a capacity for the most unbounded knowledge ; but all these, as yet, lie dormant, undeveloped. There is one exception, however, which is, as it were, the germ, or rather the foundation, of all his future acquisitions. By instinct, which is nothing less than God working within him,\* he has the power of moving certain muscles. He can cry, suck, swallow, open his eyes. Hunger, which has been denominated the sixth sense, is the main cause of all these motions.

By imperceptible degrees, his muscular powers are extended. In some three or four months, by the exercise of his hands, he acquires faint notions of form and distance ; in other words, he has *learned to see* ; and now begins to recognise the affectionate being, whose unremitting tenderness watches over his safety, and hourly nourishes him from her own bosom. Delighted with his acquisitions, his thirst for knowledge is continually on the increase. Every object, within his reach, is eagerly seized and examined. His eyes, his ears, his hands, his mouth, are in constant requisition. During his waking hours, he cannot be kept still a moment. To the unobservant, he seems as if inspired with an intense spirit of mischief, an ardent love of destruction. But nothing can be more contrary to the fact. All these movements are caused by the divine love of knowledge, as yet neither broken by disappointment, nor misled by the false philosophy that deals in nothing but empty sounds. In the strange world in which he finds himself, every thing is a marvel ; the most common object to us, is to him, full of interest. Hence, not satisfied with skimming the mere surface of things, he tears them apart, or dashes them in pieces, in search of more complete information. It signifies not, that these actions may be partly or wholly instinctive. This is the way, the only way, in which knowledge can be acquired.

For the next nine or twelve months, his education proceeds with the most surprising rapidity. In addition to the immense number of objects, with whose qualities he has made himself familiar, he has learnt to balance and support his body, to walk, and, wonderful to relate, he can perform the miracle of,—*speech* ! What an increase of interest does this last give to his studies ! To the knowledge of qualities, he now adds that of names, not mere dead vocables, but living language, the materials of thought. Our little philosopher now begins to trace resemblances, to distinguish differences, to generalize, to form his classifications, his theories. To one *class* of objects, he gives the name of *man*, to another, *tree*, to a third, *stone*. And all this, without even the slightest offer of instruction from others. His store of knowledge is all of his own collecting. If he has assistance, it is from Nature alone.

From the age of one year, to that of four or five, the child, under the tuition of his first instructress, Nature, continues steadily and rapidly to advance in the knowledge of his vernacular language. But how does he contrive to add new words to his stock ? Deals he in theory, or in practice ? Is it by means of the *elements* of words, or *definitions*, or *grammars* ? Must he know the names of letters and syllables, before he can acquire a word ; and must he rely, for a knowledge of its meaning, on dictionaries, or oral definitions ? No, truly. Nature's method is directly the reverse of that of man. By observation he learns a few names, in constant use ; and he acquires the knowledge of verbs, qualities, and particles, by *observing their connection* with those known names : in other words, *by the context*.

\* "The bee works most geometrically, without any knowledge of geometry ; somewhat like a child, who, by turning the hand of an organ, makes good music, without any knowledge of music. The art is not in the child, but in him who made the organ. In like manner, when the bee makes its comb so geometrically, the *geometry is not in the bee*, but in that *great Geometrician*, who made the bee, and made all things, in number, weight, and measure."—*Reid*.

Who ever thought of explaining to a child the meaning of the words, *good, bad, love, this, he, from, to, for, &c.* Only let the attempt be made, and its utter futility will quickly appear.

Mean-while, his knowledge of *things* increases as fast as his stock of *words*. His sphere of observation is rapidly extended, and all his senses are engaged in philosophical investigations into the nature of the objects around him ; the minerals, vegetables, animals, and works of art, which adorn the earth ; the sun, moon, and stars, which embellish the heavens.

While the intellectual powers of the child are thus in a state of progressive development, his physical education is by no means at a stand. If he have received a moderately healthy constitution from his parents, he delights to spend his time in the open air, where his lungs can have full play, and where his limbs may expand and gain strength, by unrestricted exercise. The children of the poor have here a decided advantage over those of the rich ; for such, unfortunately, are the weakness and folly of the latter, that the health of their offspring is too frequently sacrificed, at the shrine of their vanity and love of display. Fashion, that insatiable Moloch, is not content with the consecration, by its devotee, of *his own* soul, purse, and person. It demands, that his *child* shall *pass through the fire* ; that, at whatever risk to his health and intellect, his body shall be converted into a mere clothes-screen for the display of the frivolous fancies of the tailor and milliner. Where such a sacrifice has been consummated, it is vain to look either for strength of body or vigor of intellect. The unfortunate little victim must neither run, climb, wade, roll, nor play. The clothes must neither be torn nor soiled. Every thing must give way to the clothes. And, finally, the child, if he survive, grows up a mere dandy ; “ a clothes-wearing man ; a man whose trade, office, and existence, consists in the wearing of clothes.” When shall this base idolatry come to an end ? When shall the Moloch of Christendom be pulled from his throne, and cast into that fire, wherein so many of his victims have perished. This can be accomplished only by a radical change in female education. *Female* influence is, here, all in all.

But to return. During this portion of his life, too, the *moral* sense of the child begins to be developed. He perceives, that there are many other beings in the world besides himself, some of whom have the same claims that he has, on the attention of his parents. He finds out, that he cannot have his own way in every thing ; that to attempt it is only to subject himself to suffering ; that it is necessary that he should, in some degree, respect the rights of others. Should his parents, at this period, have sufficient tact to notice and encourage the first appearance of *sympathy with the joys and sorrows of others*, an antagonist to the selfish principle will soon be more or less developed, that may neutralize many of its evil effects ; while, on the contrary, should this be neglected, and his selfish views and actions be encouraged, as is too frequently the case, it may probably attain a degree of strength, that may tinge his maturer age with the darkest colors, seriously affecting both his future usefulness and happiness. For no truth in morals is more certain, than that no one can be happy, who lives for himself alone ; and that the stronger the affections, the greater the chance for felicity.

But who is the great MORAL SCHOOLMASTER, at this critical period of the child's life ? It is PUBLIC OPINION, acting through the *conversation* and *example* of his parents, of his brothers and sisters, and of his other playfellows. It is the combined power of the *whole human race*, which may correctly be denominated CUSTOM, or TRADITION. Through this medium, Moses and the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles, Luther, Calvin, Faust, his Pilgrim forefathers, Penn, Washington, Franklin, and even Watt, Fulton, and McAdam, combine, in moulding this precious germ of immortality. Among this host of worthies, however, many evil influences throw their quota into

the formation of what may be considered TRADITION. The follies and vices of the surrounding world ; the superstitions of our Saxon and Norman ancestors ; nay, the dark blot of slavery, which stains so large a portion of our country, contributes its share in the formation of character, even where it has never existed.

The child has now arrived at the age, at which it is usual for his *school* education to commence, the results of which have already been noticed. Let us continue to observe the results of his education from other sources.

His childish associates now continually increase in number, and, with their extension, his ideas proportionally expand. Nature, likewise, is beheld on a larger scale. He begins to discover, without the aid of books, that the world is not all contained within the narrow circle of his horizon. He hears of richer climes, of the extensive wilds of the unbounded West, and of the crowded marts along the Atlantic coast, in his native land, and of distant seas and foreign lands, beyond them. His parents take him to the HOUSE OF GOD, of whom, already, he has attained some vague, undefined notion. Here, however, whatever may be the case in after years, as yet he gains but little direct instruction. The teacher in that important school is commonly too full of his learning, or has not the talent (and it is one of the first order) of accommodating his language to the comprehension of our pupil, and of the other *children of larger growth*, who listen to his instructions. The indirect influence, however, is powerful.—The town meeting begins to attract his notice. He swallows, with avidity, the political knowledge to be picked up in that arena, and acquires some general ideas of his rights and duties. The district-school meeting, also, proves to him a source of information. In those two schools, our future legislators receive their chief training. But most of his knowledge of justice, forms of law, rights, and wrongs, is derived from our judicial establishments, from the more solemn, formal courts in the county town, to the more simple dispensation of right in the justice's office.

Such, independently of the teachings in the district schoolhouse, are the principal *seminaries* for training our youth in knowledge and in virtue. Many other influences for good and for evil, might be enumerated. But these are sufficient for our purpose.

And now, reader, what thinkest thou of the supply of virtue and intelligence, furnished by our primary schools ? At the great table of knowledge, where our youth are fed, where their physical powers and intellectual and moral faculties are nourished and expanded, from their first appearance in the infant, to their full growth in the perfect man, what *proportion* is supplied by SCHOOL EDUCATION *as it is* ? Is it really more than

“ A beggarly account of empty boxes,”

——“ thinly scattered, to make up a show ?”—*Shakspeare.*

Are not most of our district schools, places where foundations are laid, upon which no superstructure is to be reared ; acquisitions made merely for the rust and the moth to corrupt ?\*

We shall presently see, what different results might reasonably be expected from the SCHOOL *as it should be* ? where real knowledge should be

\* In a Report on the State of Education in Bengal, published by order of the government of that country, the following melancholy picture is drawn of the state of the schools. We leave it to every one to decide for himself, how much of it is applicable to those of New England. “ The scholars are entirely without instruction, both literary and oral, regarding the *personal virtues and domestic and social duties*. The teacher, in virtue of his character, or in the way of advice or reproof, exercises *no* moral influence on the character of his pupils. For the sake of pay, he performs a menial service, in the spirit of a menial. On the other hand, there is no text or school book used, containing any *moral truths* or liberal knowledge ; so that education, being limited entirely [chiefly] to accounts, tends rather to *narrow* the mind and confine its attention to *so-called gain*, than to *improve the heart and enlarge the understanding*.”



dispensed, instead of its semblance ; kernels, in place of husks and shells. Meanwhile, let us continue our examination of the SCHOOL *as it is*, under the different aspects of physical, intellectual, and moral, education.\*

[To be continued.]

### MEMOIR OF DR. NATHANIEL BOWDITCH.

[Continued from the last Number.]

#### CHAPTER II.

From 1784 to 1795,—between the ages of ten and twenty-one.

*His apprenticeship, his habits.*—*Studies Chambers's Cyclopædia.*—*Results of his studies ; gains the respect of all.*—*Dr. Bentley, Dr. Prince, and Mr. Reed, do him kindness : by their means allowed access to 'The Philosophical Library.'*—*He makes philosophical instruments.*—*Calculates an almanac at the age of fourteen.*—*Studies Algebra : delight he experienced from this new pursuit.*—*Learns Latin.*—*Reads works by Sir Isaac Newton.*—*Studies French.*

Doubtless, it was with a sorrowing heart that Nathaniel left his own dear home, and his kind mother, to take up his abode among strangers ; for he was to live at the house of his employer, Mr. Hodges. But, if he did feel sad, he was not one to neglect a duty in consequence of sorrow. The shop in which he was employed was situated very near the wharves, in the lower part of the town of Salem. We do not see many such stores now, in Boston ; though something similar is sometimes found in small country towns. In it, a great variety of goods was sold, especially every thing which would be useful to a sailor. Pork and nails, hammers and butter, were kept in adjacent barrels. The walls were hung with all the tools needed in the seafaring life. There was a long counter in it, at one end of which, where Nathaniel had his little desk, when not engaged with customers, he used to read and write. He always kept a slate by his side ; and, when not occupied by the duties of the shop, he was busied with his favorite pursuit of arithmetic. In the warm weather of summer, when there was little business, and the heat was uncomfortable, he was frequently seen by the neighbors with his slate resting upon the half-door of the shop, always employed, instead of playing or idling, as is too frequently the case with boys in similar circumstances. Even on the great holidays of Fourth of July and General Training, he did not leave his studies for the purpose of going to see the parade, but remained at the shop, laboring to improve himself ; or, if the shop was closed, he was in his little garret-room at his employer's house. Study and reading were beginning to be his only recreation. Frequently, after the store was closed at night, he remained until nine or ten o'clock, instead of spending the evening in folly or guilt. Many long winter nights he passed in a similar manner, at his master's house, by the kitchen fire. While here, he did not become morose or ill-natured, but frequently, when the servant girl wished to go to see her parents, who lived one or two miles off, he took her place by the side of the cradle of his master's child, and rocked it gently with his foot, while busily occupied at his books.

\* In an address delivered at Worcester, Massachusetts, a few years ago, the orator said, "We see the magic influence of our schools, in the habits of industry, sobriety, and order, which prevail in the community ; in the cheerful obedience yielded to the laws ; and in the acts of charity and benevolence, which are every day multiplied around us." This sentence, to be correct, should be read thus : "If properly conducted, we should see the magic influence of our schools, in the habits of industry, sobriety, and order, which *would* prevail," &c. That the community do possess habits of industry, sobriety, and order, is undoubtedly true ; but the speaker attributed them to a wrong source. Nor can any one doubt, that the schools might easily be so modified, as to have a powerful influence in improving and extending such beneficial habits.



As he became older, he became interested in larger and more important works ; and of these, fortunately, he found an abundant supply. His employer lived in the house of Judge Ropes, and Nathaniel had permission to use the library of this gentleman as much as he wished. In this collection he found one set of books, which he ever afterward valued very much. He sought to purchase a copy of it, when he was old, having the same kind of feeling towards it that he bore towards his grandmother's Bible. It was Chambers's Cyclopædia. As you may judge from the name, Cyclopædia, these books, consisting of four very large volumes, contained much upon a great many subjects. It is like a dictionary. He read every piece in it ; and copied into blank books, which he obtained for the purpose, every thing he thought particularly interesting, especially all about ciphering. Previously, he had studied navigation, or the methods whereby the sailors are enabled to guide their ships across the ocean. In this Cyclopædia he found much upon this subject ; also upon astronomy, or the knowledge of the stars, and other heavenly bodies ; and upon mensuration, or the art with which we are enabled to measure large quantities of land or water. Upon these and other similar subjects he devoted constantly his powers.

But he was not satisfied with merely studying what others did. He made several dials and curious instruments for measuring the weather, &c. He likewise, at the age of fourteen years, made an Almanac, so accurately and minutely finished, that it might have been published. Whilst engaged upon this last, he was more than usually laborious. The first rays of the morning saw him at labor, and he sat up, with his rushlight, until late at night. If any asked where Nathaniel was, the reply was, "He is engaged in making his Almanac." He was just fourteen years of age, when he finished it. It is now in existence, and in his library. This library consists of more than two thousand books, which, during his long life, he had collected. Yet, to my mind, the little Almanac is the most valuable book of the whole, because it was the first evidence he gave of his perseverance.

August 1, 1787,—that is, at the age of fourteen,—he was introduced to a mode of calculating which was wholly new to him. His brother came home from his school, where he had been learning navigation, and told Nathaniel that his master had a mode of ciphering by means of letters. Nathaniel puzzled himself very much about the matter, and imagined a variety of methods of "ciphering with letters." He thought that perhaps A added to B made C ; and B added to C made D ; and so on ; but there seemed to him no use in all this. At length, he begged his brother to obtain for him the book. The schoolmaster readily lent it ; and it is said that the boy did not sleep that night. He was so delighted with reading about this method,—or algebra, as it is called,—that he found it impossible to sleep. He afterwards talked with an old English sailor, who happened to know something about the subject, and received some little instruction from him. This person afterwards went to his own country ; but, just before he left Salem, he patted Nathaniel upon the head, and said, "Nat, my boy, go on studying as you do now, and you will be a great man one of these days." You will see, before finishing this story, that the prophecy of the old sailor was amply fulfilled.

But all this labor, this constant exertion, must, you will think, have given him friends. Your suspicion is very correct. He became known as a young man of great promise ; as one more capable than his elders were of deciding many questions, particularly all those in which any calculations were to be made. Consequently, when about seventeen or eighteen years old, he was frequently called upon, by men much older than himself, to decide important questions. All these he was so willing to attend to, that those who applied to him became very much attached to him. But he gained the notice not merely of common persons, less learned than himself ; but his industry, his fidelity to his employers, his talents, attracted the no-

tice of men well known in the community. Among these were two clergymen of the town. At the church of one of these he attended ; and Dr. Bentley used never to pass the store, without stepping in, to talk with his young friend. Nathaniel likewise availed himself of the learning of Dr. Bentley ; and often visited his room, in order to converse with him. Dr. Prince was the other clergyman. This gentleman had studied much the same subjects that the apprentice had pursued. He was very glad to see a young man zealous in the same pursuits. There was another individual, who kept an apothecary's shop ; and it was he, who, with the aid of the two clergymen, opened to our young student the means of continuing his favorite studies, with more success than he had ever anticipated. Mr. Reed,—for that was his name,—likewise gave him permission to use all his books, of which he had a great many. But the chief means of study, to which I allude, was the permission to take books from a library which had been formed by a number of gentlemen of the town. The kindness of the proprietors of this library was never forgotten by the young apprentice ; and in his will, made fifty years afterwards, he left a thousand dollars, in order to repay the debt of gratitude which he felt he had incurred. But you may want to know something about the formation of this library, and the books of which it was composed. Sometime during the Revolutionary War, alluded to in Chapter I., Dr. Kirwan, an Irishman and a learned man, put the greater part of his library on board a ship, in order to have it carried across the Irish Channel. While on the voyage, the vessel was taken by an American ship of war, and the books were all carried into Beverly, and were afterwards sold at auction, in Salem. They were the books of all in the world that were most needed by the apprentice. He had been studying science, chiefly, and concerning which there were very few works printed in America ; and suddenly he found himself allowed free access to all the important books which had been printed in Europe, upon the same subject. You may readily imagine how eagerly he availed himself of the opportunity thus afforded him. Every few days he was seen with two or three volumes under his arm, going homeward, and on his arrival there, he read and copied all he wanted to study. He made, in this way, a very large collection of manuscripts, which now exist in his library. Thus, by his own exertions, he, at the early age of eighteen, became acquainted with the writings of most of the learned men of Europe ; and he did this, at the time when he was engaged almost constantly in his store,—for he made it a strict rule, never to allow any study or reading, however interesting, to interfere with his duties to his employers.

Having been instructed in the elements of algebra, Nathaniel soon found that there were books written upon it in other languages, which he knew he ought to read, if he intended to know as much about it as he could. One of these books was written in a language which is known by the name of a dead language, in consequence of its having ceased to be spoken by the people of the country in which it was originally used. It was in Latin. This language usually requires many years of study, in order to be able to read it well, even when one has able instructors. Nathaniel, however, never thought of the difficulties he had to surmount, but commenced, alone, the study of it, June 1790. He was soon in trouble. He could not understand his Latin book on mathematics. He asked many who had been at college, but they were puzzled by the peculiar expressions as much as he was. At length, however, by the aid of his friend, Dr. Bentley, and afterwards, of a German who gave him lessons, he succeeded in mastering the greatest work in modern times, written by Sir Isaac Newton, who, you know, is one of the most renowned philosophers that has ever lived in this world. He moreover discovered in one part of it, a mistake, which, several years afterwards, he published ; but he was deterred from doing so at first, because a very much older person than he, a professor in the college, said that the apprentice was mistaken.

But Latin was not the only language that he learned. Finding in the Kirwan library many books upon his favorite pursuit, written in French, he determined to learn that tongue, likewise. Accordingly, at the age of nineteen, (May 15, 1792,) he began to study it. Fortunately, he met at this time a German who wished to learn English. With him he made an arrangement. Mr. Jordy agreed to teach the apprentice French, on condition that Nathaniel would teach him English. For sixteen months they met regularly, a certain number of times a week, and the consequences were very important to the youth's future success in life. One circumstance took place during this study of French, which I think it important to mention. Nathaniel, thinking merely to learn to read a French book, supposed that it would be scarcely necessary to spend time in learning accurately to pronounce the words. These, as is the case in the English tongue, are frequently pronounced very differently from the manner in which we should be led to speak them, if we judged merely from their mode of being spelled. His master protested against teaching, without reference to the pronunciation; and, after much arguing, Nathaniel consented to the wishes of his instructor, and he studied the language in such a way, that he could converse with a Frenchman, as well as read a French book. You will soon see the good that resulted. But now I must close my chapter.

## CHAPTER III.

From 1784 to 1796,—between the ages of ten and twenty-two.

*Apprenticeship continued.—Favorite of his companions.—Learns music: neglects for it, his studies.—Gets into bad society: his decision in freeing himself from his bad companions.—Engages in the survey of the town of Salem, after leaving the store.—Sails on his first voyage to the East Indies: extracts from his Journal during this voyage: arrival at the Isle of Bourbon: return home.*

Though so interested in his studies, Nathaniel never, as we have seen, neglected a known duty. Though busily engaged, whenever any one came to the store he was always ready to leave study, in order to attend to him. And he did this so cheerfully, and with so bright a smile, that all were pleased to meet him. His young companions loved him, for he was not one of those vain persons who think themselves more important than others, because they are more learned. On the contrary, what he knew himself he longed to impart to others. He belonged to a juvenile club, for the discussion of different subjects. In this association his opinion had much weight, because he rarely spoke, and never, unless he had something of importance to say.

Some of his comrades were very fond of music. He had originally a great taste for it. Music, at that time, was less cultivated than it is now; and generally, those who practised it were likewise fond of drinking ardent spirits. Nathaniel's love of the flute led him, at times, to meet with several young men of this class. In fact, he was so much delighted with their company, that he began to forget his studies. Day after day, he spent his leisure hours in their society; and, for a time, all study was neglected. At length, he began to think thus: "What am I doing? forgetting all my studies, in order to be with men whose only recommendation is, that they love music? Their characters I despise, though I love their songs. I will do so no longer." He decided, and immediately he forsook them.

May every boy who reads this remember it, and try, if ever led into temptation as the apprentice was, to say, "I will not," with the same determined courage that he did.

The time was fast approaching, when he was about to leave the business of shop-keeping, and enter upon the more active duties of life. It is true, that, to a certain extent, he had been engaged in active life ever since entering his apprenticeship. At the age of ten, he had left the home of his



loved mother, and had been obliged to depend much upon himself. His father's habits had wholly prevented him from being of service to the family. The mother had died ; the family had been broken up ; and Nathaniel had thus at an early age been thrown upon the world. After having remained with Ropes & Hodges until they gave up business, Nathaniel entered the shop of Samuel C. Ward, which was a similar establishment, and there he remained until he was twenty-one years old. He then quitted, forever, this employment.

In 1794, by a law of the State, every town was obliged to have an accurate survey and measurement made of its limits. Captain Gibaut and Dr. Bentley were appointed to superintend this business, by the Selectmen of Salem. Believing that the calculating powers of the apprentice would be useful to them, he was made assistant ; and, during the summer of 1794, he was thus occupied. Thus we see how his studies already began to be useful to him. For his share of the pay, on this occasion, Nathaniel received one hundred and thirty-five dollars. Towards the termination of the summer, Mr. Derby, a rich ship owner in Salem, wished Captain Gibaut to sail for him in a vessel to Cadiz, and thence round the Cape of Good Hope to the East Indies. Captain G. consented, and he proposed to Mr. Bowditch to go with him, as clerk. Mr. B. agreed to the terms, and arrangements were made, when, owing to some difficulty with Mr. Derby, Captain Gibaut resigned to Captain H. Prince. Mr. Bowditch was unknown to the latter ; but, at the suggestion of Mr. Derby, who had heard of the talents and industry of the clerk, the same arrangements were continued by Captain Prince, as had previously been made.

Thus we see a new era in his life was beginning ; and let us look a moment at him. He is now twenty-one years of age. More learned, already, than many much older than himself, in consequence of his untiring industry, and his devotion to duty. Yet he was modest and retiring. He was still full of joyousness and fun, at times, and always ready for acts of kindness. Above all, he was a good youth ; no immorality had ever stained him ; he was as pure as snow. His love of truth had been given him by his mother ; and, since her death, he had loved it still more. It was to him a bright light, as it were, to guide him. Cannot we foresee his career ?

On January 11, 1795,—that is, when he was a few months more than twenty-one years of age,—he sailed from Salem, in the ship *Henry*. Though he went as clerk, he was prepared to undertake the more active duties of sailor and mate of the vessel. Thinking that he should be too much occupied to be able to read, he took very few books ; and therefore he devoted much more time to observations of the heavenly bodies, the state of the weather, &c., while at sea, and upon the manners and habits of the nations he visited, than he did to reading. Though he had not been educated as a sailor-boy, his studies had prepared him to understand the most important part of a seaman's life,—the art of guiding the vessel from one shore to another, across the ocean. In other words, he had studied much on navigation, and copied books upon that subject.

The journal which he kept during the voyage is quite long. One of the first lines you meet, on opening the book, is the motto which he chose for himself. It is in Latin, and means, that *he would do what he thought to be right, and not obey the dictates of any man*. He notes the events of every day, most of which are similar ; but occasionally, something unusual occurs.

February 7, 1795, he writes thus : “ At 10, A. M., spoke a ship, twenty-five days out from Liverpool, bound to Africa. We discovered her this morning, just before sunrise, and supposed her to be a frigate.” They discovered, soon, that it was a negro slave ship, and he exclaims thus ; “ God grant that the detestable traffic which she pursues may soon cease, and that the tawny sons of Africa may be permitted quietly to enjoy the

blessings of liberty, in their native land." During the passage to the Isle of Bourbon, situated, as you know, east of the southern extremity of Africa, he frequently alludes to his native land, in terms of respect and love. On May 8th, the ship arrived in the harbor of Bourbon. Perhaps you may like to see his description of the town.

"May 9th. After dinner, Captain P., Mr. B., and I, went to see the town. It is a fine place. All the streets run in straight lines from the shore, and cross one another at right angles. There is a church here, with a priest to officiate. I went into it. We afterwards went into the republican garden. It is a beautiful place, though at present much neglected. The different walks are made to meet in a centre, and form the figure of a star, each one of the rays of which is formed by thirty-four mango trees, placed from twelve to fourteen feet apart." There are other places, of which he speaks, and in them he finds flower-gardens, in abundance, intermixed with groves of coffee and orange trees, &c.

He afterwards speaks of the poor slaves, who, it appeared, suffered as much there as they do in some other places, at the present day.

He visits the people of the place, and finds them superstitious and vicious. Alluding to the vice, he found there, he writes: "I was reminded of the beautiful words of Solomon, in the Proverbs." This was not the only occasion on which he remembered his Bible; and it seemed to have a kindly influence over him, always. On one occasion, several young men argued with him about its truth; and, having heard them patiently, he at length struck his breast: "Talk no more about it. I know that the Bible is true; that it is capable of doing to me the greatest good. I know so, by the feelings I have here."

After remaining in this corrupt place until July 25, he set sail for home, and arrived in Salem, January 11, 1796,—having been absent exactly twelve months.

[To be continued.]

#### SELECTIONS FROM THE REPORT OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF WARE.

"There is no better index of the character of a town, than the character of its primary schools. Let us examine these, and we will judge, in most cases correctly, what your people are. There is no interest that a town can cherish with a more laudable pride, and that will yield them a richer revenue of reward, than these nurseries of their children. The Roman matron Cornelia, when inquired of where her jewels were, waived the answer, till her two sons had returned from the school, of which they were the ornament, and then, introducing them to her neighbor who had made the inquiry, she nobly said, '*these, these, are my jewels.*' And had she been able to display all the diamonds that ever glittered in the mines, or all the gold of the world, they would have been unworthy of comparison with her intelligent sons. But *her* sons were not brighter jewels, naturally, than *our* own. Education *made* them, and in like manner, it will *make* ours. Every town, then, by making proper provision for the education of its youth, may create for itself a treasure of more value, by a thousandfold, than all its lands, its houses, its manufactures, and its merchandise." \* \* \* \*

"Though more money was appropriated than usual, your committee are agreed in the opinion that it was called for. More is necessary, now, than in times past. *Wages are higher.* Suitable male teachers cannot now be had, as thirty years ago, for ten dollars per month. The least sum, for which a competent person can now be had, is fifteen dollars; and it is worth that, in the case of any one, who is fit to teach. Cheap teaching is the bane of our schools. *Cheap* schools, in the end, are almost invariably found to be *dear*. If a district have sixty dollars, for a winter's term, it would be wisdom in them, to pay it to a first-rate teacher, for but two months' service, rather than with it to employ a man, who was unfit for the busi-

ness, even five months. There is some murmuring that the wages of teachers are so much higher than they used to be. But this murmuring is unreasonable. Such know neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. Have the rates of district school teachers advanced as much as the rates of labor, in other branches of business? Shall we expect to command the service of a man, qualified to teach our children, for ten dollars or twelve dollars per month, when he, or another with less than a tithe of his learning, can earn as much, or more, at moderate labor on a farm, and as much again in a factory, or at some mechanical employment? Shall we complain of a dollar and a half per week, as high wages to a good female teacher, when good domestics can have this, in respectable families, and as much again, in some other kinds of business? It is vain and absurd to think of securing good teachers for our schools, unless we are prepared to give them as good wages as they can command in other departments of honorable industry. We must expect then, to pay more than was customary ten and twenty years ago; and, to enable us to do this, we must raise more money for this purpose than was necessary ten and twenty years since. And we are better able to do this. How much has the taxable property of Ware advanced, within twenty years? Three or four fold; that is, the property of the whole town is worth three or four times as much as it was twenty years ago. Were we then to raise three or four times as much as was expended for this purpose, twenty years since, we should only be doing in the same ratio.

"But there is *another* reason, besides the advance in the wages of teachers. *Public sentiment* is in favor of doing more, and we must keep up with it. Other towns are increasing their appropriations, and, unless we do the same, we must expect that our schools will be of an inferior order, and our character as a community such as will mortify us. Nothing is more indicative of a short-sighted policy, than parsimonious appropriations for the education of our children. The tone of public sentiment on this subject is good, and worthy of this renowned Commonwealth." \* \* \* \*

"It is proper that something should be said upon the expediency of putting the female sex into winter schools, to which all ages are admitted. Though they may sometimes succeed, as was the fact in the case referred to, this winter, yet, in the majority of instances, they make a failure. There is an incongruity on the very face of such an arrangement. Females are of too delicate a texture for the rudeness and consequential importance of boys fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen, years of age. Our winter schools almost always have some of this age. A woman can do nothing with such, if they are disposed to be contrary. And there is a very natural feeling with boys of this age, that it is pusillanimous to *obey a woman*. The committee honor the sex, and would not abridge their influence, in the least, in its proper sphere. Their fitness to instruct girls of any age, and boys under ten, they do not question. They regard them as perhaps superior here to the sterner sex. But they would not recommend them as the best fitted for our winter district schools. Sometimes, it may be expedient to employ them.

"The committee feel it to be their duty to make a few suggestions, which seem to them important.

"One pertains to the prudential committee, or those, whose business it is to engage the teachers. No one expects to have a good school, unless the teacher be competent. As soon might we expect to meet with a well-disciplined and efficient army, which had an imbecile general. This, then, we take for granted, that, if we would have good schools, we must have good teachers. *Other* things may be important, but *this* is indispensable. Now, how shall such teachers be secured? By waiting for them to make application? No. As a general fact, prime teachers are not obliged to seek situations. They are not among the *seekers*, but the *sought*. Your prudential committee, then, should not be men, who will wait for teachers to come to them, but who will seek out the right sort of persons. We do not say, that



no man, who is seen seeking a school, will prove a good teacher, because we know individuals who have done this, and have taught prime schools. But, as a general principle, we repeat, that the best teachers will not be *applicants*, but *applied to*. This is true in almost all the affairs of life. Every person, and every commodity, for which there is a demand,—and for what is there a greater demand than teachers?—are not obliged, as we all know, if of superior order, to go a begging for employment, or for purchasers.

“And, further, desirable teachers, as a general thing, must not only be sought, but they must be sought in season. Unless this be done, they will be preengaged. Though some, whose business it is to engage instructors, are so dilatory, as not to attend to their duty till the eleventh hour, yet all are not of this character. Some men will attend to the duties of their office betimes, and, as a consequence, they will secure the best teachers. Every prudential committee-man, then, if the business of procuring teachers is left with him, should be a man of activity, and energy, and good judgment. More depends upon this committee than upon that which examines the candidates. If a candidate be brought before the examining committee, and possess the requisite literary qualifications, the committee can hardly do less than license him, though there may be an utter deficiency in several other important particulars. This renders it so important for every district to have the right sort of men, for prudential committees; because their interest in this matter goes just so far as the worth of a school depends upon the character of its teacher.

“Another suggestion pertains to the age of teachers. The committee are of the opinion, that persons advanced in life are not the most suitable for this business. As we advance in life, we lose the sympathies and associations of youth. Thus we cannot appreciate, as we once could, perhaps, the springs that animate the youthful breast; and of course cannot manage the young so successfully, as in more early life. This probably is the reason why, of a large family of children, the youngest are the most poorly governed; so that the last child, born to parents in advanced age, is frequently spoiled. Again, every decade of years brings about a new set of books; so that the man, who has not taught for ten or more years, finds himself in the condition of a mechanic who has to learn the use of a new set of tools. He may be a skilful workman with the old set, and yet never do well with the new. This change of books, to which allusion has been made, has been most complete within fifteen years. There is not a book used in our Common Schools, now, that was in vogue, when we were boys. Most new books profess to be an improvement. Some of them are; and some, again, are a *burlesque* upon improvement. But, whether better or not, their introduction, at first, is an embarrassment to the teacher; and, where all are new, it becomes a most serious embarrassment. For these reasons, and others that might be presented, the committee would recommend caution in the employment of persons who are turned of forty-five or fifty.

“A third suggestion, which your committee would make, relates to the more frequent visitation of the schools, by the districts. They would propose a plan for each district, the object of which is to bring all the parents into the school, once, at least, during every summer's or winter's term.

“The plan is this. Let the district be divided into sections of two, or four, or six, families, according to its size. Almost every district, thus, would furnish some eight, or ten, or twelve, sections; and let it be the duty of one of these sections to visit the school, every week, say on Friday, or some other set day, in the afternoon, until the circuit of the whole district had been made. If convenient, both the parents should go. Each of these sections should have the privilege of inviting any friends that they choose to accompany them. This is the outline of the plan. It is practicable, and would be attended with highly beneficial results. Each district could easily

come together, and make the division into sections, and decide which should begin the visitation, and in what order it should proceed.

"There is not time, now, to point out the various advantages of such a system. We are persuaded, if it could be adopted and faithfully carried out, it would give an increased impulse to the cause of education. It would interest more deeply parents, teacher, and scholars. This would stimulate to greater fidelity and effort, the result of which would be more triumphant success.

"Finally, the subject of education is one of vital importance. Education is designed to make man what he ought to be, under the conditions of his being ; to fit him for society, for usefulness ; for his duties as a citizen, as a neighbor, as a parent, as a Christian, as an immortal being. Here is a sphere of vast amplitude and glorious promise. A proper education, both mental and moral, and the blessing of God, are all that are necessary to enable him to fill it as he ought. How important, then, the subject of education, considered in its bearings upon an individual alone !

"But suppose a *whole people* to be interested and to be educated. The subject *now* swells in importance, in the ratio of a nation's population to a single individual. But popular education is intended to operate upon a whole people. Its design is to cultivate the great mass of the mind and heart of a nation. Among all human enterprises, this is one of the noblest and most benevolent. If a man desire an enduring fame, as a public benefactor, let him enlist in the cause of popular education. If a man were to traverse the length and breadth of a land, to rouse the slumbering energies of a people to the subject ; if he were to prepare suitable books, to be used by a multitude of young minds, and thus give shape and character to the moral and intellectual growth of a nation ; if he were to suggest improvements, by which the acquisition of knowledge might be facilitated ; he would lay a people under a contribution of respect and gratitude, greater, by far, than if he had led their armies to victory or occupied a throne. It is better to have one's name inscribed on the tablet of a nation's mind and heart, than on storied urns and triumphal monuments. There is no way, by which an earthly immortality can be so honorably secured, as by promoting the interests of general education ; of that education, which aims to make a people wise, virtuous, and happy. Give to any people, of whatever clime and whatever complexion, education and the Christian religion, and you lift them up from debasement and misery to respectability and happiness. If popular education contributes to this result, then, it is of stupendous importance. It is interwoven with the fabric of a nation's prosperity and a nation's glory. It is an agency which no nation can neglect, and be true to itself and the race of man. The more the mind and the heart of a people are properly cultivated, the more is individual, social, and national, happiness increased. Let us, then, as a town, cherish this cause, as one of the brightest jewels of our glory."

JONATHAN E. WOODBRIDGE, HENRY SMITH, HORACE GOODRICH, CYRUS HUTCHINS, JOEL RICE, A. CARTER, AARON GOULD, *School Committee.*

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The author of *Hermippus Redivivus* affirms, that the breath of beloved children preserves the benevolent schoolmaster's health, as salt keeps flesh from putrefaction.

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